

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CAIR, IR
SUBJ: CIVAIR: PANAM SCHEDULE CHANGE

REF: STATE 151371 AND PREVIOUS

1. INFORMATION GIVEN TO DEPARTMENT REPORTED PARA 1 REFTEL
ESSENTIALLY CORRECT WITH EXCEPTION ATTITUDE OF MFA IN THE MATTER,
DISCUSSED BELOW. PANAM REP HERE ON JUNE 14 GAVE EMBASSY SIMILAR
RUNDOWN ON EVENTS AS THEY DEVELOPED. PANAM REP, PRIOR TO
HIS SUDDEN DEPARTURE TO EUROPE ON EMERGENCY LEAVE, TOLD EMBASSY
THAT A SECOND LETTER FROM DGCA WITHDREW GOI'S OBJECTIONS TO (1)
HOUSTON CONNECTION AND (2) SUBSTITUTION OF 747 AIRCRAFT ON
110-111 SERIES OF FLIGHTS. ONLY ISSUE NOW REMAINING IS PANAM'S
WISH TO SUBSTITUTE BOMBAY FOR CALCUTTA.

2. ACCORDING TO THE VERSION GIVEN TO EMBASSY BY PANAM REP, IRAN
AIR'S PRESIDENT, GENERAL KHADEMI, OVERRULED LOWR LEVEL IRANIAN
OFFICIALS' AGREEMENT WITH PANAM WITH CONSIDERABLE VIGOR, AND
DURING FIRST MEETING WITH DGCA AND MFA'S LEGAL ADVISER LET IT BE
KNOWN THAT HE WAS UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO SUBSTITUTION OF BOMBAY
FOR CALCUTTA. MEETING WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SOME PYROTECHNICS, WITH
GENERAL KHADEMI THUMPING THE TABLE SAYING THAT HE WOULD "TAKE
MATTER TO SHAH" IF DGCA CONCURRED IN THE BOMBAY SUBSTITUTION.

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EMBASSY VIEWS GENERAL KHADEMI'S OPPOSITION TO EARLIER AGREEMENT
WORKED OUT BETWEEN PANAM AND IRAN AIR (I.E., BOMBAY SUBSTITUTION
APPROVED BUT WITHOUT TRAFFIC RIGHTS AND SUBJECT TO LATER REVIEW)
AS MOST UNFORTUNATE. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, OF THE THREE PERSONAL-
ITIES WHICH HAVE THE FINAL SAY ON CIVAIR MATTERS HERE (EXCLUDING
OCCASIONAL REFERRALS TO HIGHER POLITICAL LEVELS)--DGCA, MFA'S
LEGAL ADVISER, AND PRESIDENT OF IRAN AIR--LATTER IS BY FAR THE

MOST POWERFUL. WHILE PREVIOUS DGCA, THOROUGHLY MIFFED BY KHADEMI'S INTRANSIGENCE, DID OCCASIONALLY OVERRULE KHADEMI ON SOME MATTERS (CHARTER FLIGHTS; NO OBJECTION FEES), PRESENT DGCA IS NEW IN HIS JOB AND HAS BEEN NOT AT ALL INCLINED TO TAKE STANDS CONTRARY TO GENERAL KHADEMI'S. PRESENT DGCA IS VERY WELL DISPOSED TOWARD U.S. AND EMBASSY GIVES CREDENCE TO PANAM'S VIEW THAT HE FAVORABLY INCLINED TO RULE IN FAVOR OF THE BOMBAY SUBSTITUTION. FACT REMAINS, HOWEVER, AS HAS SO OFTEN BEEN TH CASE IN U.S.- IRAN CIVAIR MATTERS, THAT GENERAL KHADEMI IS CALLING THE TUNE IN THIS PARTICULAR PROPOSED SCHEDULE CHANGE. KHADEMI IS NOTORIOUSLY SENSITIVE ON ANY MATTERS TOUCHING UPON IRAN AIR'S CASH FLOW POSITION. FYI, PANAM REP HERE TELLS US THAT U.S. CARRIER EXPECTS ABOUT 2500 PAYING PASSENGERS TO MATERIALIZE FOR BOMBAY STOPOVER, PICKED UP IN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE, WITHIN A FAIRLY SHORT TIME. NEXUS OF RESOLUTION OF PROBLEM, AS EMBASSY SEES IT, IS (1) TO GET GENERAL KHADEMI TO BACK OFF ON BOMBAY SUBSTITUTION ISSUE, OR ALTERNATIVELY (2) PERSUADE DGCA TO WITHDRAW HIS JUNE 13 LETTER, WHICH STILL APPLICABLE AS REGARDS BOMBAY SUBSTITUTION, THUS PROVOKING A COLLISION WITH GENERAL KHADEMI AND RISKING EVEN HIGHER LEVEL INTERVENTION. COURSE NO. 1 OFFERS BEST CHANCE OF SUCCESS IN SHORT RUN, EMBASSY BELIEVES, BUT WE ARE NOT OVERLY SANGUINE ABOUT OUR CHANCES. EMBASSY REGRETS THAT CIVAIR PICTURE HERE HAS BECOME SO TANGLED WITH PERSONALITY OF GENERAL KHADEMI BUT WANTED DEPARTMENT TO HAVE THE FACTS.

3. WITH RESPECT TO POSITION OF MFA LEGAL ADVISER, EMBASSY BE-
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LIEVES THAT HE CAN BE EXPECTED T BEND WITH THE PREVAILING WINDS (READ: GENERAL KHADEMI). WHILE LEGAL ADVISER MAY WELL HAVE BEEN INCLINED TO GO ALONG WITH EARLIER PANAM-IRAN UNDERSTANDING, KHADEMI'S POSITION NOW RENDERS THIS PRVIOUS INCLINATION A NULLITY. WHEN EMBASSY LEARNED OF UNDERSTANDING REACHED BETWEEN PANAM AND LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS IN IRAN AIR, EMBASSY SENT MFA A NOTE ASKING WHETHER SAID UNDERSTANDING ENJOYS "APPROVAL OF IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT OF IRAN."

4. MEANWHILE, WHEN DGCA, MFA LEGAL ADVISER AND GENERAL KHADEMI MET A SECOND TIME ON JUNE 15, NO PROGRESS WAS RECORDED AND STALEMATE CONTINUES.

5. VISITING EXPORT-IMPORT BANK TEAM HAS MEETING WITH GENERAL KHADEMI MORNING JUNE 20 TO DISCUSS FINANCING OF FIVE 747'S, WHICH IRAN AIR WISHES TO ACQUIRE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THIS MEETING, E/C COUNSELOR WILL ENDEAVOR TO SPEAK PRIVATELY WITH GENERAL KHADEMI ON BOMBAY SUBSTITUTION MATTER, EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE WHICH USG ATTACHES TO THIS ISSUE. DEPARTMENT WILL BE PROMPTLY INFORMED OF RESULTS THIS CONVERSATION.

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